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ABSTRACT

This lesson supports third- through fifth-grade students' exploration of multiple online sources to gather information about the life of a well-known explorer, Christopher Columbus. During the two 50- to 60-minute sessions, students will: use prewriting (a K-W-L chart) to prepare for research; use prior knowledge to extend the depth of inquiry; collect and organize historical information; create a time line representing historical facts and events; learn how to import Internet photographs and credit the source; and write an informational summary report using a word processing program. The instructional plan, lists of web resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A list of eight links to web sites about Columbus; step-by-step instructions for creating a word processing document; and a guided scavenger hunt worksheet are attached. (RS)

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# Cyberspace Explorer: Getting to Know Christopher Columbus


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## Grade Band

3-5

## Estimated Lesson Time

Two 50- to 60-minute sessions

ED 480 322

## Overview

This lesson supports third- through fifth-grade students' exploration of multiple online sources to gather information about the life of a well-known explorer, Christopher Columbus. After completing a cyber scavenger hunt, students use their notes to prepare a time line and summary report. Extension activities promote critical literacy by exposing students to Columbus from the perspective of the Native American and by engaging them in a discussion of point of view. The online activity used in this lesson can easily be adapted to study other historical figures (e.g., Martin Luther King, Cesar Chavez) and language arts topics (e.g., poetry, figurative language).

## From Theory to Practice

Sutherland-Smith, W. (2002). Weaving the literacy Web: Changes in reading from page to screen. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 662-669.

- Teacher modeling is one strategy that helps students gain accessibility and confidence when utilizing digital text.
- Web-based literacy skills can be supported through the use of a handout, which offers a step-by-step guide for students.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- Use prewriting (a K-W-L chart) to prepare for research
- Use prior knowledge to extend the depth of inquiry
- Collect and organize historical information
- Create a time line representing historical facts and events
- Learn how to import Internet photographs and credit the source
- Write an informational summary report using a word processing program

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## Resources

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- CyberExplorer Site Guide
- Creating Your Report handout
- Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet
- Looks Are Deceiving: The Portraits of Christopher Columbus
- Computers with Internet access
- Interactive time line
- LCD projector

## Instructional Plan

### Preparation

1. Review the Web links that students will be using during the cyber scavenger hunt:

    - Looks Are Deceiving: The Portraits of Christopher Columbus
      This website provides numerous pictures of Columbus, and also addresses some of the controversy connected to the Native American point of view.

    - Elementary Themes: European Explorers
      This site is appropriate for elementary students.

    - Christopher Columbus: A Culinary Story
      Your school filter may block this website because the words "alcohol" and "tobacco" are used to describe Columbus' dietary content. Ask your media specialist to override this block if you would like your students to explore what Columbus and his men ate during their voyages.

    - The Explorations of Christopher Columbus
      This is an excellent website that is visually stimulating and easy to navigate. Links are provided for each of Columbus' four voyages.

    - Christopher Columbus (1451–1506)
      This website provides information on the birth and death of Columbus, the titles and positions he was granted by the crown, and his four voyages.

    - The European Voyages of Exploration: Christopher Columbus
      This website provides information on the European Explorations, including a tutorial on Columbus and an animated map showing the trade winds. Note: The reading level on this website may be a bit difficult for some students.

    - Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal
      Featuring excerpts from Columbus' journal, this website provides good information. Some students may find this website intimidating because there is a lot of textual content and no visuals.

    - Christopher Columbus: Internet Resources for His Life and Times
      This website provides numerous links to articles about Christopher Columbus. The text is written for an intermediate reading level.
2. Photocopy the Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet and the Creating Your Report handout so that each student will receive one copy of each.

3. Reserve the computer lab or a wireless computer cart for two class periods and make sure that you

have an LCD projector.

**Instruction and Activities**

**Day 1**
**Introductory Activity (10 minutes)**

1. Have students begin creating a K-W-L chart by brainstorming what they already know about the familiar historical figure, Christopher Columbus. Ask them:

    - Who was Christopher Columbus?
    - Why is he famous?
    - When did he live?

    Record students' responses on the board and have students make notes in the *Know* column of their chart.

2. Once students have created a substantial list of their prior knowledge, move to the *Want to Know* column. Encourage students' curiosity by asking questions that focus on Columbus' life:

    - What would you like to know about Christopher Columbus?
    - When and where was he born?
    - When and where did he die?
    - What was his family life like?
    - What were his accomplishments?
    - Did he earn any titles or awards as a result of his explorations?
    - Did he have any disappointments?

    Have students make notes on their K-W-L chart as they brainstorm as a class the things they would like to know about Columbus.

**Learning Activity (40 minutes)**

3. Before beginning the scavenger hunt, instruct students to open the website Looks Are Deceiving: The Portraits of Christopher Columbus. Have them scroll down a bit until they see the blue hypertext links for Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4. Invite students to click on each figure and decide which picture of Columbus they would like to use for the report they are going to create. Monitor students' progress, alerting them to take note of how different the pictures look.

4. Now model the procedure for copying a picture from the Internet to your desktop. Go to the same website and link to a picture of Columbus. Slowly demonstrate the following steps:

    - Click and hold on the picture until a drop-down menu reveals selections.
    - Select "Download Image to Disk."
    - Select "Desktop" as the location to save the picture.

- The figure number already appears in the name text field. Add "Columbus" to the beginning of the saved name so the file will be easy to locate on your desktop.
- Click "Save."

5. After modeling the procedure for copying an image, monitor students' progress as they save their own pictures of Columbus to their desktop.

6. Pass out the Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet. This worksheet includes many of the brainstorming questions from the **Introductory Activity**. Students can add other questions that interest them.

7. Start the activity by saying:

   *Today we are going to be cyberspace explorers as we search for information about the well-known explorer, Christopher Columbus. We will use the online CyberExplorer Site Guide to access websites and gather information. In addition to your K-W-L chart, you'll use the Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet to takes notes as you read through the Internet sites.*

8. The remainder of the session should be devoted to completing the cyber scavenger hunt. Students visit the websites listed on the CyberExplorer Site Guide and take notes on their Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet. Direct students to the "Hints" provided on the worksheet and to keywords, such as *born, voyages,* and *Pinzon.* Assist students in identifying visual text differences, such as text size, position of text on the page, color, and style, all of which provide visual reading clues. Monitor effective reading strategies as well.

9. End the session by commending your explorers on their hard work. Tell them that they will be using their findings from this activity to create a time line and summary report on the following day.

**Day 2**
**Introductory Activity (10 minutes)**

1. Spend a few minutes reviewing the lesson activities from Day 1. Look back at the K-W-L chart to refresh students on what they already know about Columbus and what they wanted to know. Review the process for copying a picture from the Internet to the desktop. Encourage a discussion on what it was like to explore the life of Christopher Columbus using the Internet. Answer any questions that students may have.

2. Explain that for today's activity students are going to use the information they collected during their cyber scavenger hunt to create a report on Christopher Columbus that includes a time line highlighting important dates and events in Columbus' life.

**Learning Activity (25 minutes)**

3. Have students connect to the interactive time line on ReadWriteThink and follow these introductory instructions:

   - Enter "The Life and Times of Christopher Columbus" as the *Title.*
   - Enter your own name in the field *By.*
   - Select "Date" from the drop-down menu for *Unit of Measure.*
   - Click on "Next Entry" in the upper right-hand corner of the screen to begin creating your time line.

4. Instruct students to build a time line made up of at least five key dates or events collected during their cyber scavenger hunt. To get students started, you might model how to create a time line

entry using the LCD projector. Remind students to print out their time line when they are finished working. Monitor students carefully to answer any questions they have while working and keep them on task.

**Culminating Activity (25 minutes)**

5. After completing the time line, give students the Creating Your Report handout. Students will follow the steps in these instructions to create their summary report independently. You may give oral instructions as well for students who are struggling.

**Extensions**

- Allow students to visit the website Christopher Columbus to read about Columbus from the perspective of the Native American. This is an especially thought-provoking website for the more advanced student, providing historical information and an opportunity to consider point of view. Although some of the links on this website have not been maintained, you can direct students to read "Columbus Day Banned by PC," "Faithful Response to the 500th Anniversary," and "Goodbye Columbus!". These readings offer a good opportunity to engage students in a discussion about point of view and the controversies surrounding Christopher Columbus.
- Another website that can be useful in exploring point of view is Looks Are Deceiving: The Portraits of Christopher Columbus. Students can explore how artwork can play an important role in history.
- Use the lesson What Was Columbus Thinking? to have students reflect on the motivations behind Columbus' explorations, his reactions to what he found, and the consequences, intended and unintended, of his endeavor.

### Student Assessment/Reflections

- Written student responses from the K-W-L chart
- Guided Scavenger Hunt worksheet
- Interactive time line printout and summary report

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## IRA/NCTE Standards

1 - Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

2 - Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

5 - Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

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# CyberExplorer Site Guide

**Christopher Columbus**

1. Looks Are Deceiving : The Portraits of Christopher Columbus

2. Elementary Themes: European Explorers

3. Christopher Columbus: A Culinary Story

4. The Explorations of Christopher Columbus

5. Christopher Columbus (1451-1506)

6. The European Voyages of Exploration: Christopher Columbus

7. Christopher Columbus: Extracts from Journal

8. Christopher Columbus: Internet Resources for His Life and Times

# Creating Your Report

**Step-by-step instructions for creating your word processing document**

## Create your document in Microsoft Word:

1. Double click on the hard drive icon to open the disk drive.
2. Locate and double click on the Applications folder.
3. Locate and double click on the Microsoft Office folder.
4. Locate and double click on the blue W icon labeled Microsoft Word Document.
5. With your cursor at the top of the document, enter the following title:

   **The Life and Times of Christopher Columbus**

6. Hit the Enter key once.
7. Enter the following subtitle:

   **Researched by <your name>**

8. Save your document by going to File > Save As. Save the file as "The Life and Times by <your name>." Click "Save."
9. Hit the Enter key three times.

## Insert your picture of Christopher Columbus:

1. Open your word processing document, go to Insert > Picture > From File.
2. Select "Desktop" for the location of your file.
3. Locate and double click on the Columbus Fig.jpg.
4. Your picture will be inserted at the point where your cursor was in your word processing document.
5. Document the source of the picture by copying the Web address or URL and pasting it underneath the picture. Go to your Favorites and find the website that includes the picture. Select the URL and click Copy. Reselect your word processing document, place your cursor below the picture, and click Paste.

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# Guided Scavenger Hunt

Christopher Columbus

Access the online **CyberExplorer Site Guide** <http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson126/cyber.html> to help guide you in finding answers to these questions and any others that you add. If you need help, use the Hints to go directly to specific websites.

1. What year was Christopher Columbus born? (Hint: #4 and #5)

2. Where was Christopher Columbus born?

3. What did Columbus' father do for a living?

4. Did Christopher Columbus get married? If so, to whom? When?

5. What titles did Christopher Columbus receive? List three if you can!! Include who gave him the title and when he or she gave it to him. (Hint: #5)

6. Who was Martin Pinzon? Did he get along with Christopher Columbus?

7. How many voyages did Columbus make looking for Asia? What are the dates of his voyages? (Hint: #4 and #6)

8. List at least 5 food items that Christopher Columbus and his men would have eaten on their sea voyages. (Hint: #3)

9. What year did Christopher Columbus die? What was the probable cause? Where is he buried?

Add your own questions and answers on the back of this sheet.

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